

1 NORRISTOWN STATE HOSPITAL PUBLIC HEARING  
2 LAND PLANNER STUDY: PHASE ONE DUE DILIGENCE

3 - - -

4  
5  
6 Tuesday, October 9, 2018

7 Commencing at 6:30 p.m.

8 Norristown Municipal Hall

9 235 East Airy Street

10 Norristown, Pennsylvania 19401

11  
12 PRESENTERS:

13 TROY D. TRUAX, AICP,  
14 Senior Associate Planning Services Division Manager  
-- Michael Baker International

15 JILL GAITO, Technical Consultant  
16 -- Michael Baker International

17 TRACEY VERNON, PP, AICP  
-- Vernon Land Use

18 TODD J. POOLE, Managing Principal  
19 -- 4ward Planning, Inc.

20 - - -  
21  
22  
23  
24

I N D E X

Page:

PRESENTATIONS

Troy Truax	4
Jill Gaito	14, 29
Tracey Vernon	19
Todd Poole	32

- - -

PUBLIC COMMENT

Senator Daylin Leach	51
Mark Cassell	54
Marla Rivera	57
Kim Henderson	58
James Walters	59
Ken Christovich	60
G. Hayward Simpson	63
Marla Rivera	67
Denisse Agurto	68
Christopher Jaramillo	68
Theresa Lauer	69
Mary Ellen Moran	71

I N D E X

Page:

PUBLIC COMMENT

5	Kara Rothschild-Rode	74
6	Bill Caldwell	78
7	Anthony Uhrich	81
8	Susan Shannon	83
9	Kim Henderson	85
10	Kym Ramsey	86
11	Bill Corbett	89
12	Chris DiPaolo	91
13	Tory Bright	99
14	Abby Grasso	110

- - -

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

1 MR. TRUAX: Good  
2 evening everybody. Thank you so  
3 much for coming out this evening.  
4 Hopefully everybody can hear well  
5 with the microphone.

6 I am Troy Truax, the  
7 project manager for the Land  
8 Planning Consulting Team that the  
9 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hired  
10 to conduct this study with Michael  
11 Baker International. I'm out of  
12 the Harrisburg office, but we very  
13 much have a local presence too here  
14 in the Philadelphia area,  
15 et cetera.

16 Tonight's objective is  
17 to give you an update on the Land  
18 Planner Study for the Norristown  
19 State Hospital. We just completed  
20 what we call our Phase 1 Due  
21 Diligence Technical Study. We  
22 wanted to give you an update on  
23 what we learned so far. And then,  
24 more importantly, this is an

1 opportunity to provide and obtain  
2 more input from citizens,  
3 residents, stakeholders, and others  
4 that have an interest in this  
5 project, and the future of the  
6 State Hospital, and the potential  
7 highest and best use of that  
8 property going forward.

9 Just by disclosure, the  
10 meeting is being recorded by the  
11 stenographer. So the goal is after  
12 tonight this presentation will be  
13 made available on the  
14 Commonwealth's website, the  
15 Norristown State Hospital website,  
16 Department of Human Services, along  
17 with a transcript. That is a good  
18 way for us to capture all the  
19 information, and then you have the  
20 ability to have that available too.  
21 So we will have a copy of this  
22 available on the state's website,  
23 and we will share that information  
24 with you.

1                   So again the consultant  
2                   team consists of Michael Baker, we  
3                   are the lead engineering consultant  
4                   on the project.  Joined with us is  
5                   Vernon Land Use, Tracey Vernon is  
6                   here tonight as well.  Joining me  
7                   is Jill Gaito, from Michael Baker.  
8                   Moonstone Environmental has helped  
9                   us with some of the environmental  
10                  assessments on the campus, and we  
11                  will explain that information.  And  
12                  then the real estate advisers, they  
13                  looked at the real estate from an  
14                  appraisal process.  And then also  
15                  4ward Planning, Todd Poole,  
16                  president of 4ward Planning is  
17                  here, and is going to provide  
18                  information on the market analysis  
19                  relative to the highest and best  
20                  use, and we will talk about that  
21                  information as well.

22                         So in terms of our  
23                         agenda tonight, our goal is to be  
24                         done by seven o'clock, so around

1           seven o'clock time frame we will  
2           give you an opportunity to come to  
3           the microphone, provide your name  
4           and address, and provide a comment  
5           as well. We'll talk about a little  
6           of those ground rules here at the  
7           end.

8                                So we want to give you  
9           an overview of what our study  
10          objectives are; what we are charged  
11          with doing as part of our contract  
12          with the state, with this project;  
13          give you an overview of our overall  
14          work plan and the time frame that  
15          we are scheduled to complete the  
16          study, conduct the study; and then  
17          getting into some of the meat of  
18          the information. Again, completing  
19          what we call our Phase 1 Due  
20          Diligence Technical Studies, and  
21          that includes extensive stakeholder  
22          outreach with a number of folks  
23          that are in the room tonight, but  
24          also too those that haven't had a

1 chance to participate and provide  
2 input. This is exactly why we are  
3 here tonight, to give you that  
4 opportunity. And then we'll talk  
5 about the next steps, where do we  
6 go from after here after tonight's  
7 public meeting, relative to the  
8 next several phases of the project.  
9 And then we will open it up for  
10 your comments.

11 So our objectives for  
12 the project are, number one, we  
13 have to look at the highest and  
14 best use opportunities for the  
15 Norristown State Hospital campus,  
16 and we will show what we mean by  
17 the actual area of the campus that  
18 we're looking at specifically. And  
19 then, number two, determine if any  
20 portion of the property can be,  
21 number one, economically and  
22 legally subdivided, while allowing  
23 those portions of the property that  
24 still operate as a State Hospital

1 under its charge with the  
2 Department of Human Services to  
3 provide ongoing mental health  
4 treatment for the individuals that  
5 need those types of services.

6 So this information  
7 here, Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3,  
8 outline our scope of work, what we  
9 are technically obligated to  
10 provide back to the Commonwealth  
11 for this project.

12 Phase 1 is where  
13 we're -- we just completed Phase 1,  
14 so that was through the May and  
15 August timeframe of this year.  
16 We've looked at various types of  
17 technical studies, and we are going  
18 to give you an overview of that  
19 information. We are now just  
20 entering into the Phase 2 part of  
21 the study, and that includes this  
22 public meeting where we are  
23 obtaining additional input, and  
24 also providing a report out on what

1 we learned so far.

2 So we are not in a  
3 position to offer any  
4 recommendations on the project at  
5 this point. We are still in the  
6 discovery mode, and this is really  
7 an opportunity to report out what  
8 we've learned so far, and then get  
9 information back, obtain  
10 information back from you as  
11 additional stakeholders for the  
12 project.

13 And then moving on,  
14 Phase 3, which will begin after  
15 this October, this fall looking  
16 into early the first quarter of  
17 next year, we will be producing the  
18 actual feasibility study that will  
19 provide layout recommendations,  
20 et cetera.

21 So with respect to the  
22 project study area, there's two  
23 things to keep in mind: Number  
24 one, the red area is both the

1 Norristown Farm Park. That's the  
2 large property with all the  
3 underdeveloped area. And then down  
4 in the lower left-hand corner,  
5 outlined by the yellow, that is the  
6 campus of the State Hospital. We  
7 are specifically looking at the  
8 yellow area, not the red area, but  
9 the yellow area is where we are  
10 concentrating our study of focus.  
11 And that encompasses all of the  
12 actual campus property of  
13 Norristown State Hospital.

14           And then with respect  
15 to the municipalities that are  
16 involved, you can see the yellow  
17 dash line, generally outlines  
18 whether the municipal boundaries  
19 exist within those properties. So  
20 you have West Norriton Township,  
21 Norristown Municipality, and East  
22 Norriton Township. None of the  
23 campus exist -- or in terms of the  
24 campus itself is located in East

1 Norriton, but you can see by the  
2 yellow line that approximately half  
3 of the campus is situated in both  
4 Norristown and West Norriton  
5 Township.

6                   So this area again, in  
7 a different view, again looking at  
8 that yellow area, and the yellow  
9 dash line, this is the campus area  
10 that we looked at, and it is shown  
11 in the previous slide. It's  
12 198.8 acres, and that also does not  
13 include, on the campus there is a  
14 Pennsylvania State Police operation  
15 sitting right at to the bottom, at  
16 the very bottom of the graphic  
17 right where the yellow line is,  
18 there's a Pennsylvania State Police  
19 Dispatch Center. That is not being  
20 looked at. There's like an  
21 approximately five acre area that  
22 is not being looked at for this  
23 project. And then there's about 65  
24 acres of the campus located in West

1 Norriton Township. And the total  
2 number of buildings on the campus,  
3 there's 55 buildings in total, that  
4 are situated in the entire campus  
5 area.

6 So in terms of the site  
7 history -- this is a historic  
8 bird's-eye view of the State  
9 Hospital campus, many, many years  
10 ago. But the State Hospital was  
11 completed, in terms of its  
12 construction, in 1879, and  
13 operations began in 1880. So it's  
14 very much been part of this  
15 community for well over a century.

16 By 1947 the facility  
17 grew to support approximately 5,000  
18 individuals needing mental health  
19 services -- so again it just gives  
20 you the context of the large size  
21 of operation that the hospital once  
22 was at. And then forensic services  
23 began in 1937 with the development  
24 of Building 51. And that's still

1 in operation today as a forensic  
2 unit.

3 So the current hospital  
4 operations, I'm going to turn this  
5 over to Jill Gaito. Jill is with  
6 Michael Baker, and then she will  
7 walk through the current operation  
8 of the campus.

9 MS. GAITO: I always  
10 make sure I know how to work the  
11 remote.

12 Okay, so one of the  
13 tasks that I felt was very  
14 important to our study is to get a  
15 good foundation of understanding of  
16 what exactly is going on out on the  
17 campus. Because when Tracey Vernon  
18 and I were doing stakeholder  
19 studies, it became very clear that  
20 there was not a comprehensive  
21 understanding of all of the  
22 operations that were happening out  
23 on the campus. So this is a  
24 breakdown of what is actually

1 operating out on the campus right  
2 now.

3 Of course you have the  
4 State Hospital operations, but you  
5 also have county mental health  
6 operations in addition to some  
7 other not-for-profit tenants and  
8 some community activity, which I am  
9 going to breakdown in a further  
10 slide.

11 In total there is 1,195  
12 people that are working on campus  
13 right now in different operations.  
14 There are 12 non-state,  
15 not-for-profit major organizations  
16 working on the campus, in addition  
17 to State Hospital campus.

18 We provided this map  
19 and color coded it, it's a little  
20 bit easier to see when you go back  
21 online and look at the presentation  
22 online. But it's pretty clear that  
23 only the dark blue are actually  
24 hospital psychiatric care

1 buildings. The green are leased  
2 buildings, which I'm talking about  
3 other tenants that are operating on  
4 campus. So you can see that  
5 there's quite a variety of  
6 operations happening there, and  
7 that it's a little bit spread out  
8 on the campus.

9                   These are the buildings  
10 that are operated by the State  
11 Hospital operations themselves.  
12 And there are 754 folks working for  
13 the State Hospital itself, on  
14 campus. And you can see the  
15 buildings and the type of  
16 operations that are specifically  
17 the State Hospital.

18                   These numbers are very  
19 current; I just got these about a  
20 week or so ago. There's a hundred  
21 and two civil beds operating in the  
22 State Hospital campus and a hundred  
23 eighty-seven forensic beds.

24                   The forensics -- it's

1 important to note how many counties  
2 are served by both of those  
3 operations. The Commonwealth has  
4 only two facilities that provide  
5 forensic services. Norristown, of  
6 course, is one serving the eastern  
7 part of the state, and Torrance  
8 State Hospital serves really the  
9 majority of the counties west of  
10 here.

11 This is a list of the  
12 county mental health services that  
13 are operating on the campus. There  
14 are six different organizations  
15 that are providing mental health  
16 services to the community, not just  
17 Montgomery County. You can see how  
18 many counties, again, are served.

19 There are a lot of  
20 misconceptions about how the county  
21 operations work. It's really a  
22 joint operation that provides  
23 services that individually counties  
24 would not be able to provide in

1 their individual county if they  
2 didn't work together to financially  
3 provide these services as a  
4 cohesive unit. And, again, there  
5 are 441 people employed in the  
6 mental health county -- in county  
7 mental health services.

8           And then finally there  
9 are nonprofit and community  
10 organizations also operating on  
11 campus. Philadelphia Search and  
12 Rescue, providing search and rescue  
13 teams for a four-state area. We  
14 have the Stony Creek Anglers who  
15 are providing the trout nursery and  
16 a lot of fishing activities for the  
17 community. And then the Norristown  
18 Youth Eagles Football League uses a  
19 lot of the green space that is  
20 being provided by the Department of  
21 Human Services and EGS.

22           I know one evening we  
23 were out there for an evening  
24 meeting, and if I had to guess I

1 would say there were at least 300  
2 people there using the different  
3 fields, either playing football, or  
4 soccer, or just running around, a  
5 lot of parents and kids. So it's a  
6 very heavily utilized green space  
7 that provides a benefit for the  
8 community.

9 So as part of this  
10 we're going to talk tonight about  
11 the findings of the Phase 1  
12 activities, which included a lot of  
13 stakeholder outreach, and a lot of  
14 technical studies. And with that  
15 I'm going to turn it over to Tracey  
16 Vernon to give you an overview of  
17 the stakeholder outreach that was  
18 conducted during Phase 1.

19 MS. VERNON: Thank you,  
20 Jill.

21 I am going to give you  
22 a quick overview of the stakeholder  
23 outreach conducted as part of this  
24 project.

1 The first --

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hold your  
3 microphone up.

4 MS. VERNON: How's  
5 that?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All  
7 right.

8 MS. VERNON: Okay.  
9 Perfect.

10 So the first phase of  
11 the study included pretty extensive  
12 stakeholder outreach, which we will  
13 talk about in a moment.

14 The outreach in Phase 2  
15 starts tonight, because this public  
16 meeting will be able to provide us  
17 with some input. And then  
18 throughout the Phase 3 study of the  
19 project, we'll be reaching out to  
20 stakeholders, as well, to talk  
21 about some of the findings as we  
22 move forward.

23 So for Phase 1 of the  
24 Land Planner Study, a small team

1 was originally scoped to conduct 25  
2 individual meetings. That scope  
3 has expanded, and we have ended up  
4 working with 129 individuals  
5 representing over 50 different  
6 organizations. We conducted 24  
7 in-person meetings, 13 telephone  
8 interviews. And there was also an  
9 online public survey conducted as  
10 part of the project, and that was  
11 open in the month of August, and we  
12 had 352 responses.

13 So in all, nearly 500  
14 individuals were involved in the  
15 Land Planner Study for the Phase 1  
16 portion of the project. So that  
17 included individual one-on-one  
18 meetings, focus group meetings, and  
19 then also the ongoing public  
20 survey. Our stakeholder outreach  
21 took place from June to the end of  
22 August this year.

23 We offered two  
24 stakeholder workshops in August.

1 We had 32 participants and those  
2 stakeholders included neighbors who  
3 live in the proximity of the  
4 Norristown State Hospital campus,  
5 and those are neighbors from  
6 Norristown and West Norriton  
7 Township, and additional  
8 stakeholders identified by  
9 Norristown.

10 I am going to give you  
11 a real brief overview of some  
12 stakeholder perspectives, things  
13 that we heard during the meetings,  
14 and then I will give you a  
15 high-level overview of the public  
16 survey response.

17 From the stakeholder  
18 perspective there were a lot of  
19 expectations and concerns that  
20 folks brought up to us. They want  
21 to make sure the consultant team  
22 knew that we need to manage the  
23 expectation of this particular  
24 project going forward. There were

1           also some concerns about relocating  
2           existing services from the State  
3           Hospital campus; and also concerns  
4           about keeping existing services on  
5           the State Hospital campus.

6                         The next was lack of  
7           communication and outreach.  
8           Several stakeholders -- in fact,  
9           pretty much most stakeholders  
10          identified that there seems to be a  
11          lack of communication between what  
12          is happening from the Commonwealth  
13          perspective and individuals in the  
14          community. There was lack of  
15          understanding of knowing the  
16          operations that happen on the State  
17          Hospital campus.

18                        Third, many indicated  
19          that there are many underutilized  
20          land and buildings on the property,  
21          and there was widespread concern  
22          why those buildings being left in  
23          the condition that they are in, why  
24          aren't they being improved.



1 the State Hospital campus since its  
2 inception. There was a lot of  
3 concerns: Why would the state want  
4 to relocate facilities that's  
5 providing services to the public?

6 On the other hand we  
7 heard a lot of concerns from folks  
8 about why continue existing social  
9 service operation on the campus,  
10 why aren't those operations  
11 dispersed throughout Montgomery  
12 County?

13 Some potential future  
14 uses in areas that we heard, we  
15 heard everything from mixed use  
16 development to adoptive reuse of  
17 the buildings; sort of having a  
18 high tech incubator campus on the  
19 space; using the campus for  
20 existing educational uses and new  
21 educational uses. Then on the  
22 other hand we had a lot of folks  
23 that said: Leave the campus the  
24 way it is. Leave the existing

1 operations in their current state,  
2 providing valuable they services to  
3 the community.

4 So it was a pretty  
5 broad perspective that we heard  
6 from different stakeholders.

7 I am going to briefly  
8 go over the public survey results.  
9 We had 352 responses -- these were  
10 open-ended questions, so it wasn't  
11 multiple choice. So we went  
12 through responses to all four  
13 questions. What you see on the  
14 screen we're providing the top ten  
15 responses to four questions we  
16 asked.

17 The first was: As a  
18 citizen, how do you view operations  
19 at the Norristown State Hospital  
20 campus?

21 Overwhelmingly, folks  
22 indicated there were a lot of  
23 deteriorated and underutilized  
24 buildings. People also said there

1 was value for mental health service  
2 provided on the campus.

3 A lot of folks said:  
4 We don't know what goes on at the  
5 campus. So I think that the slide  
6 Jill went over showing the  
7 operations is for the -- about what  
8 happens on the campus.

9 The second question:  
10 If the campus remained as is, how  
11 would you be impacted?

12 Most folks said there  
13 would be no impact if the campus  
14 remained in its current condition.  
15 But a lot of folks said there would  
16 be negative impact to the  
17 community's economy.

18 The third question: If  
19 a portion of the State Hospital  
20 campus is made available for  
21 redevelopment, how would you be  
22 impacted?

23 Overwhelmingly, folks  
24 said if it was made available for

1 redevelopment there would be some  
2 type of traffic concern, traffic  
3 issues.

4 People also indicate  
5 that would be positive impact to  
6 the community's economy, bringing  
7 some revenue generation. A lot of  
8 folks said there was lots of  
9 recreation space, open space on the  
10 campus, that would be potentially  
11 lost.

12 The last question:  
13 Five or ten years from now, what do  
14 you envision happening on the  
15 campus property?

16 People are very  
17 concerned about making sure that  
18 open space and recreation remains  
19 intact. And people also want to  
20 make sure that there's space for  
21 community and social services, and  
22 improved delivery of mental health  
23 services.

24 With that I turn it

1 over to Jill to talk about  
2 development.

3 MS. GAITO: So  
4 Moonstone Environmental was the  
5 firm that conducted the Phase 1  
6 environmental site assessment, and  
7 really the bottom line is there is  
8 nothing in the soil and groundwater  
9 that is a huge impediment to  
10 redevelopment, or utilization of  
11 the space.

12 There were a few  
13 underground storage tanks that were  
14 removed in the early '90s before  
15 the tank regulations were  
16 developed, so the biggest  
17 recommendation is quantify and  
18 document the removal of those  
19 tanks, maybe do some sampling to  
20 make sure there was no soil  
21 contamination left behind when  
22 those tanks were removed.

23 So Moonstone  
24 recommended, and almost every Phase

1 I have ever been involved with,  
2 recommends Phase 2 environment site  
3 assessment. It's almost a given in  
4 most cases. And so they did  
5 recommend Phase 2 environmental  
6 site assessment prior to any  
7 redevelopment that would happen  
8 within the campus, and it would be  
9 focused to where they suspected the  
10 tank activity to the happen. And  
11 the cost for that activity is under  
12 \$100,000 to do the Phase 2  
13 environmental site assessment. And  
14 if anybody works in that field you  
15 know that's not a big number.

16 In the soil and the  
17 water there's really nothing there  
18 that is any kind of barrier --  
19 significant barrier to  
20 redevelopment that we know of. The  
21 bigger barrier comes in the work  
22 that Moonstone did in the buildings  
23 themselves and the asbestos  
24 abatement that would have to be

1 done. Just given the age of the  
2 buildings, almost all of them have  
3 asbestos containing materials that  
4 would have to be removed either  
5 prior to demolition of buildings --  
6 there are several buildings that  
7 have been determined to be  
8 structurally unsound, and may not  
9 be salvageable. The cost to do  
10 asbestos abatement on the buildings  
11 that are determined to be  
12 structurally unsound is almost \$6  
13 million just in itself.

14 And then there are  
15 other buildings where we felt could  
16 be reutilized, and you would have  
17 to remove the asbestos, replace it  
18 with other material such as other  
19 types of insulation, things like  
20 that, and the cost to just handle  
21 the asbestos abatement and  
22 replacement on those buildings is  
23 over \$14 million.

24 So as you can see that

1 the asbestos issue is a much bigger  
2 issue than soil and water when it  
3 comes to the environmental.

4 With that I will turn  
5 it over to Todd Poole who did the  
6 Highest and Best Use Study, another  
7 one of the technical studies that  
8 we did in Phase 1.

9 MR. POOLE: Thank you,  
10 Jill.

11 Good evening everyone,  
12 my name is Todd Poole with 4ward  
13 Planning. We're a land use  
14 economist, so I get to work on real  
15 estate and economic analysis for  
16 development.

17 The first thing I want  
18 to take you through is really  
19 understanding what Norristown State  
20 Hospital currently represents as an  
21 economic entity, or an engine, if  
22 you will.

23 And you can think of  
24 this as a factory, you can think of

1           this as an office corporation, but  
2           when we talk about number of  
3           employees and the economic impact  
4           that that particular facility has  
5           it really doesn't differ all that  
6           much if you had a factory there, or  
7           if you had a large office building  
8           with a lot of workers.

9                        Because as you see on  
10           the screen, and as was mentioned  
11           earlier, directly there's just  
12           under 1200 people who work on that  
13           campus on a day-to-day basis,  
14           combined for Norristown State  
15           Hospital, 1466 jobs. That's  
16           direct, indirect, and induced.

17                       And when we say  
18           "induced" -- and we're getting into  
19           a little economic jargon here,  
20           directly is the people that work  
21           there, indirect are the suppliers  
22           and servicers who provide services  
23           because of all that employment.  
24           And induced is if I get a paycheck

1 from that campus, I go into the  
2 local community and purchase goods  
3 and services, I go to the grocery  
4 store, I'm creating employment  
5 secondarily because I spend my  
6 paycheck in a local area. That is  
7 also categorized or included when  
8 we talk about economic impact for  
9 employment.

10 So you can see the  
11 Norristown State Hospital site; the  
12 NSH Campus Tenants, which Jill and  
13 Tracey mentioned, you know they're  
14 just under 600 of those folks who  
15 work there on a daily basis; and  
16 then we look at Total Impacts, a  
17 little over 2,000 jobs, direct,  
18 indirect, and induced. And  
19 having -- you know, based on the  
20 employment wage, \$140.5 million  
21 that is not only on the campus but  
22 rippling through both the local and  
23 the regional economy. It's not  
24 just captured locally, but it

1           certainly spills out. And then  
2           finally underneath the Sewer  
3           Utility Fees is what is paid to the  
4           local wastewater utility from the  
5           State Hospital. So that's a  
6           relatively significant number on an  
7           annual basis.

8                         We, too, also conducted  
9           a survey. In this particular case  
10          we conducted a survey of employees  
11          at the hospital. We sent out  
12          approximately 650 surveys, were  
13          distributed online using Survey  
14          Monkey. And our objective here was  
15          understanding the kind of economic  
16          influence that employees at the  
17          State Hospital have, in particular,  
18          on the local economy, the local  
19          economies of Norristown, West  
20          Norriton, East Norriton, and all  
21          the other local municipalities.

22                         And so here are some of  
23          the takeaways: 190 people actually  
24          responded, which is about

1           30 percent participation rate,  
2           which is not that bad. 80 percent  
3           of the respondents lived beyond the  
4           area: Norristown, West Norriton  
5           and East Norriton.

6                         Why is that important?

7           It's important when you think about  
8           it this way: Those folks who live  
9           beyond the area that work here are  
10          importing their dollars into your  
11          community, okay?

12                        There's no difference  
13          than how the United States likes to  
14          sell stuff abroad and bring money  
15          back into the United States. You  
16          can think of it the same way here.  
17          The hospital acts in that way to  
18          the extent that you have roughly  
19          eight out of ten, at least, for  
20          those who responded of those  
21          employees who live outside of the  
22          area but are coming here, and as  
23          you see as you go further down this  
24          survey list, they are making

1 purchases on goods and services  
2 locally.

3 As a matter of fact,  
4 roughly half of the respondents  
5 make at least three weekly  
6 purchases in Norristown. One out  
7 of five respondents spent \$75 or  
8 more each week in Norristown.

9 So, again, this is  
10 not insignificant, it doesn't tell  
11 the entire story, but it talks  
12 about the economic influence that  
13 State Hospital workers have in the  
14 community.

15 Now the market analysis  
16 was what we were retained to do,  
17 and spent the majority of our time  
18 doing. We got a map of the general  
19 area that we analyzed, study areas,  
20 that dark blue area here. And then  
21 we have what's referred to as a  
22 thirty-minute primary market area,  
23 or PMA.

24 And within that

1 thirty-minute PMA is where we  
2 typically identify where the  
3 majority, say 70, 75 percent of  
4 people who live, work, and play are  
5 going to be coming back and forth  
6 to influence the hospital site and  
7 live somewhere in the area, shop  
8 and recreate.

9 "Highest and Best Use,"  
10 we've thrown that term around.  
11 What does it mean; right? You  
12 probably heard this term before.  
13 Highest and best use actually has  
14 to meet four tests in order for you  
15 to get to identification of the  
16 highest and best use for the land.

17 The first one it has to  
18 be legally permissible, okay, which  
19 basically means you can't go do  
20 something that zoning will not  
21 allow. Usually that's a relatively  
22 easy test to meet because if the  
23 citizens want it, and the governing  
24 body want it, they'll make sure

1           that the zoning permits for it.

2                       The second one is it  
3           has to be physically possible. For  
4           this one, think of you can't build  
5           on the side of a cliff, you can't  
6           build in a marsh, you can't build  
7           on environmentally sensitive lands;  
8           right -- a floodplain. Again,  
9           obvious stuff, and for that reason  
10          this one too is usually pretty easy  
11          to meet in terms of a test.

12                      The last two are the  
13          more challenging of the two to meet  
14          because oftentimes a particular use  
15          will not meet these tests.

16                      "Market Receptive"  
17          basically is -- and looking at that  
18          from the standpoint of someone who  
19          wants to invest is: Is there a  
20          market for something? Is there a  
21          market for housing? Is there a  
22          market for retail? Is there a  
23          market for office use?  
24          Entertainment? Whatever it may be,

1 if there's no market for it, we can  
2 pretty much fold up the tent right  
3 there and you can go home; right?

4 So we test for that,  
5 and I will show you some of the  
6 results that we've identified.

7 The final test of a  
8 highest and best use is it needs to  
9 be maximally productive, which is  
10 another way of saying: If I'm the  
11 developer I need to know I'm going  
12 to get a fair rate of return given  
13 the risk of the project, and the  
14 time I'm going to spend doing this  
15 project, as well as the investment.

16 It can be market  
17 receptive, and I've identified many  
18 projects, plenty of land uses that  
19 are market receptive but they are  
20 not financially feasible, or, in  
21 this case, maximally productive,  
22 because of, you know, the rents  
23 would be too low, or the cost of  
24 development would be too high, or

1           some combination thereof.

2                       Okay, there we go, this

3           is a *Readers Digest* version of what

4           we found. Right now and based on

5           the analysis that we performed, in

6           this case on the residential piece

7           of our analysis, there is demand

8           between 717 and a little over 1400

9           units of residential housing. All

10          right, market and some affordable

11          mixed into that. How do we find

12          that out? We look at the primary

13          market area, that thirty-minute

14          drive time area, and we look at,

15          you know, housing supply. We look

16          at number of workers, and estimated

17          pent-up housing demand. We look at

18          the amount of housing coming into

19          the market area, than the pipeline.

20          We are certainly aware of the

21          housing being built in the

22          downtown, as well as on the

23          periphery. We also are aware of

24          housing out, housing ages and

1 becomes physically obsolescent, so  
2 that's taken into consideration as  
3 well.

4 Long story short, of  
5 the 14,340 residential units in the  
6 primary market area, that  
7 thirty-minute market area that we  
8 believe will be needed by 2022,  
9 under the assumption that no new  
10 housing gets built in Norristown,  
11 more specifically on our site, we  
12 would assume you should be able to  
13 capture 5 to 10 of that amount.  
14 That represents the 717/1434  
15 number. So that's where that comes  
16 from.

17 We've identified demand  
18 for nearly 1800 senior housing  
19 units/beds. Thinking of beds in  
20 terms of a nursing home care,  
21 dementia care, in addition to  
22 independent living, and assisted  
23 living.

24 There is a fast-growing

1 demand for continuum care, what's  
2 now referred to as life cycle  
3 community planning, and Norristown  
4 will be -- you know, this whole  
5 area is kind of right in that sweet  
6 spot. We have an aging population,  
7 we have a larger segment of persons  
8 who are 75 and older, which  
9 represents a good chunk of that  
10 demand, and so this is what we've  
11 identified for senior housing.

12 Here's what we've  
13 identified that is not market  
14 receptive -- I am going to explain  
15 the reasons why. This location is  
16 not market receptive for office for  
17 a couple reasons. Number one --  
18 and for those of you pretty  
19 familiar with the local region you  
20 know you have a lot of commercial  
21 office space in the area: King of  
22 Prussia, Plymouth Meeting area.  
23 And where is it located? It is  
24 located principally off of major

1           arterials. Obviously, first the  
2           most being the I-76 corridor or the  
3           Pennsylvania Turnpike.

4                         You also have a glut of  
5           office space that is available,  
6           that is vacant. You have close  
7           to -- actually slightly more than a  
8           million square feet of office space  
9           in the area which is vacant. And  
10          that's not going down anytime soon.  
11          If anything it will be more  
12          inventory coming online having to  
13          do with technology, having to do  
14          with businesses not needing as much  
15          space and a variety of other  
16          reasons.

17                        All told what we are  
18          seeing is while you could develop  
19          some office space product on the  
20          site, it's going to be relatively  
21          small. And it's probably going to  
22          have more to do with co-locating  
23          next to what is there.

24                        The site also lacks

1 visibility. This is important for  
2 both office and for retail. As you  
3 might imagine, most of the retail  
4 that you are familiar with -- and  
5 I'm talking regional type retail,  
6 national retailers, regional  
7 retailers, they want visibility,  
8 they want accessibility. You do  
9 not have that with this site.

10 This site is challenged  
11 from the standpoint of providing  
12 any commercial user, whether it be  
13 office or retail, with good  
14 visibility or good accessibility in  
15 and out of the site. As a matter  
16 of fact, if you were to drop a  
17 small mall on this site, which you  
18 could because the land area is that  
19 big, you wouldn't want the traffic  
20 that went with it trying to get in  
21 and out of that mall site; all  
22 right? So you can think about it  
23 that way.

24 From a light industrial

1           standpoint, it's more or less the  
2           lack of access as well. And,  
3           again, while we're fully aware, or  
4           I'm fully aware, that you have some  
5           light industrial uses already in  
6           the area, you're probably maxing it  
7           out to put a lot more than we have  
8           light industrial uses there it  
9           would mean more truck traffic, more  
10          truck traffic that is going to  
11          impinge upon a residential  
12          neighborhood.

13                           And with that I am  
14          going to hand over to Troy.

15                           MR. TRUAX: Okay,  
16          thanks, Todd.

17                           So just in terms of  
18          next steps, for us, again, we  
19          talked about the Phase 2, in  
20          addition to some additional  
21          stakeholder's meetings,  
22          specifically some outreach with  
23          municipalities and some other  
24          interested parties that we've

1 identified as part of the process,  
2 we are also looking at some other  
3 technical studies, including  
4 utility separation, because there's  
5 a lot of utilities serving the  
6 campus, trying to figure out that  
7 myriad or network of steam, power,  
8 electric, et cetera, as part of it,  
9 is what we're looking at as well.

10 And then we will be  
11 moving into Phase 3. That begins  
12 later this fall, and most likely  
13 will take us into early next year.  
14 But our target timeframe to have  
15 the study completed and published  
16 is around March of 2019. This will  
17 have our recommendation for Highest  
18 and Best Use of the property, based  
19 upon relevant factors that we've  
20 just talked about tonight. Also  
21 additional input that we're getting  
22 from stakeholders, we're going to  
23 be looking at different options, so  
24 it's not just looking at one

1 scenario, it's going to be looking  
2 at several scenarios.

3 And then also too  
4 taking your answers to your  
5 suggestions and identifying again,  
6 like Todd just did, some of the  
7 challenges to make sure we are all  
8 clear that as opportunities move  
9 for whatever our recommendations  
10 you understand the inherent  
11 challenges that come with that,  
12 either environmental asbestos  
13 cleanup, you know, in terms of  
14 market receptiveness, et cetera.  
15 So that's really what we wanted to  
16 make sure is available to any  
17 interested stakeholder going  
18 forward as part of this process.

19 So this wraps up what  
20 we wanted to present tonight in  
21 terms of our Phase 1 due diligence  
22 efforts, where we're heading in the  
23 next two phases of the project.

24 What we'd like to do,

1 to give folks that have come  
2 tonight an opportunity to come to  
3 the microphone, the stenographer  
4 will record. If you could give  
5 your name and address that would be  
6 great.

7 And what we would like  
8 to do, those that have not  
9 participated yet either through a  
10 survey, or a stakeholder interview,  
11 we really like to give those that  
12 really haven't had a chance to  
13 participate a first opportunity up  
14 to the microphone, and we like to  
15 be cognizant there's a room full,  
16 and if we could maybe think about  
17 five minutes of time that you can  
18 provide.

19 One thing we have  
20 provided is comment cards. When  
21 you signed in did everybody get a  
22 comment card? It looks like this  
23 (indicating).

24 So on the front and

1 back you can provide written  
2 comment. There's a deadline to  
3 submit that card back to Municipal  
4 Hall here by next Friday. But also  
5 too there's an online survey. So  
6 whatever works for you the best,  
7 you can provide that additional  
8 feedback. And like I said before,  
9 this PowerPoint presentation will  
10 be available on the state website,  
11 and we will leave this up for you  
12 to look at, and then if anybody has  
13 any questions or comments to where  
14 that might be at, I have my contact  
15 information here as well. I know  
16 the -- Norristown, Randall Jones,  
17 will be happy to share additional  
18 information on how to get to the  
19 website.

20 So again, this  
21 PowerPoint and the recording from  
22 the stenographer will also be made  
23 available on the state website.

24 At this time I think

1 the legislature has another  
2 appointment. So he's standing  
3 right there ready to go so -- yes,  
4 so after -- within five minutes,  
5 try to maintain it, and then --  
6 again, this is our time to listen  
7 to you to get input. What we want  
8 to do, if you have questions, we  
9 will be recording those questions,  
10 and then what we would like to do  
11 is provide a written response back  
12 to those questions, so that  
13 everybody's questions that you may  
14 have, we can provide that in one  
15 stop shop feedback, and that will  
16 also be posted on the website as  
17 well.

18 So go right ahead,  
19 please.

20 SENATOR LEACH: Thank  
21 you. I've done something horrible  
22 to the microphone, but I'm going to  
23 try to see if this works.

24 I'm going to be

1 uncharacteristically short  
2 tonight -- can you hear me? Oh, my  
3 name.

4 Daylin Leach,  
5 D-a-y-l-i-n, L-e-a-c-h, state  
6 senator.

7 So we have been trying  
8 to make sure that we had come up  
9 with a solution to deal with the  
10 whole issue in a way that is  
11 sustainable, in a way that is  
12 productive for the community.  
13 We've tried to host a number of  
14 meetings where all these issues  
15 were discussed.

16 It's a very complicated  
17 thing, as I'm sure you know,  
18 everything from people's jobs to  
19 tax bases, to of course workers, to  
20 patient welfare, to community  
21 well-being are at stake, and so --  
22 the other thing is remember that we  
23 won't get really a second chance to  
24 get this right. Whatever we do

1 here is going to stay done for a  
2 while.

3 So I am really happy to  
4 see such a great turnout. Mostly  
5 what we want to do -- at least my  
6 office, is hear from you, what you  
7 would like to see happen, what you  
8 would like to see things look like,  
9 in two, five, ten years, and  
10 hopefully do everything we can to  
11 facilitate making that happen. I  
12 am agnostic on what the community  
13 decides. Whatever that is we will  
14 do our best to help facilitate  
15 that.

16 So we are just here to  
17 gather information and listen to  
18 what you have to say, and  
19 hopefully, we'll come up with  
20 something that is something  
21 everyone can live with and people  
22 are generally very happy about. So  
23 that's a high bar, but we're going  
24 to do our best.

1                   So anyway, I thank you,  
2                   and I look forward to hearing your  
3                   comments. Be very careful with the  
4                   microphone here.

5                   (Laughter.)

6                   MR. TRUAX: Anybody  
7                   that wishes to provide a comment  
8                   this is your opportunity to provide  
9                   additional input, but, again,  
10                  comment cards are available too, so  
11                  those that may not feel comfortable  
12                  getting up in a crowded room we  
13                  give you that opportunity as well.

14                  MARK CASSELL: Good  
15                  evening, my name is Mark Cassell.  
16                  I am the director of suburban  
17                  surface planning and schedules for  
18                  SEPTA. We are the public  
19                  transportation providers for the  
20                  State Hospital, through bus route  
21                  90, out of Norristown  
22                  Transportation Center.

23                  I would like to see  
24                  our, at least, knowledge base

1 validated as part of the  
2 stakeholder process for this  
3 project. I was not even aware that  
4 Michael Baker was involved in the  
5 study until I showed up here  
6 tonight. I did have a conversation  
7 with Tracey on the phone, based on  
8 our outreach to her, rather than  
9 being contacted. So I just wanted  
10 to make sure that we were included  
11 going forward. And some of the  
12 information, including the market  
13 study information, I think has  
14 relevance to our service, as we  
15 continue to provide it to the State  
16 Hospital grounds.

17 As has occurred over  
18 time, because of the loss of  
19 activity in some of the buildings,  
20 our ridership has diminished pretty  
21 significantly over time to the  
22 State Hospital. And the uses that  
23 would come out of the study and the  
24 development that would happen,

1           depending upon what direction it  
2           takes, has a significant impact on  
3           the amount of service and way that  
4           we serve the property going  
5           forward.

6                               Specifically, as was  
7           mentioned in this market study in  
8           regards to continuing care, or life  
9           care facility, that has very  
10          different components to what's  
11          needed in terms of providing access  
12          to jobs, than the kind of work that  
13          in many cases is going on there  
14          now. The other issue for us would  
15          be the community services that are  
16          offered at the site, if they were  
17          to be relocated, that would  
18          potentially have impact on  
19          ridership as well.

20                              So I think some  
21          additional conversation about what  
22          the various possibilities would  
23          have for service to the site are  
24          relevant. We, just like the

1 senator, are agnostic to what is  
2 decided, if there are things that  
3 come out of whatever is decided, so  
4 we would like to have a continuing  
5 conversation in that regard.

6 Thank you.

7 MARLA RIVERA: Good  
8 evening. My name is Marla Rivera.  
9 I'm a resident of East Norriton and  
10 also a healthcare worker.

11 What I didn't hear this  
12 evening was where are the  
13 residents, patients going to go? I  
14 know, I am a transplant from New  
15 York, and I know what happened in  
16 New York when many facilities  
17 closed out or had development, and  
18 they were displaced.

19 One of the discussions  
20 that have been or going to be  
21 addressed regarding the residents,  
22 the patients that utilize the  
23 services, as well as their family  
24 members.

1 I'm also a family  
2 member of someone that utilizes the  
3 facility, and it has been extremely  
4 helpful to her. Where are they  
5 going in the future? Knowing that  
6 development is critical but also  
7 the need of the patients as well.

8 (Applause.)

9 KIM HENDERSON: Good  
10 evening. My name is Kim Henderson,  
11 and I am an East Norriton Township  
12 resident. I'm also a Realtor in  
13 the area, I serve on the board of a  
14 nonprofit called The A-Team, and I  
15 also use the Farm Park on a regular  
16 basis for recreation, I run there  
17 and walk there.

18 I just would like to  
19 ask they make sure that whatever  
20 goes forward that we take our  
21 property values into consideration  
22 and our green space into  
23 consideration.

24 I would love to see

1           either a school happen there for  
2           maybe a trade or a medical college,  
3           something that's going to help our  
4           community thrive.

5                         And I just really feel  
6           like it's important -- I was not  
7           part of any of the shareholder  
8           information, but I do have a very  
9           strong stake in the community, and  
10          I appreciate the meeting this  
11          evening, and I look forward to  
12          whatever else we can do. And I  
13          also do care about the medical  
14          community and mental health. So I  
15          really appreciate a strong thought  
16          process going into this. Thank  
17          you.

18                        JAMES WALTERS: James  
19          Walters. I am a member of the EAC  
20          Anglers, and a resident of West  
21          Norriton Township.

22                        I am concerned with the  
23          impaired condition of Stoney Creek.  
24          And what I would like to see happen

1 is that massive stormwater concerns  
2 be addressed. Especially from the  
3 adjacent municipalities.

4 Thank you.

5 KEN CHRISTOVICH: Good  
6 evening. My name is Ken  
7 Christovich, and it's spelled  
8 C-h-r-i-s-t-o-v-i-c-h. I am a  
9 33-year resident of East Norriton  
10 Township. I shouldn't have touched  
11 the microphone. I think we're  
12 okay.

13 A couple of  
14 observations I would like to make  
15 on tonight's presentation, and that  
16 it's very heavy on the things that  
17 won't fit, or are inadequate, so.  
18 So I hope everybody goes through  
19 the presentation once, twice, three  
20 more times and try to figure out on  
21 maybe there's some flexibility  
22 there.

23 I would like any  
24 consideration going forward to

1 consider particularly if we are  
2 looking at housing, to the  
3 gentleman's previous point, this is  
4 the fifth highest property tax for  
5 the purpose of funding education in  
6 Montgomery County.

7 Housing values are not  
8 increasing in these three  
9 communities that are part of that  
10 district, for a number of reasons.  
11 Adding housing to this school  
12 district does a few things: First  
13 of all, it impacts the school  
14 district in terms of how many  
15 students we have space for. It  
16 impacts the school district in  
17 terms of what the net impact is on  
18 housing values.

19 I think the Einstein  
20 Hospital campus proved to us  
21 recently, as recently as 2012, that  
22 institutional uses that don't even  
23 pay fees in lieu of taxes do not  
24 raise property values. They do not

1           enhance the quality of life of our  
2           neighborhoods. They do not bring  
3           taxable revenue into our  
4           communities. Anything that does  
5           not bring jobs and taxable revenue  
6           into the community with great  
7           impact -- and I'm not talking about  
8           people buying lunch at McDonald's  
9           or gasoline at the Wawa on the way  
10          in and out of to and from work.  
11          I'm talking real impactful,  
12          accountable dollars. That doesn't  
13          contribute to our situation.

14                         And I have a comment, I  
15          suppose, and then perhaps in the  
16          further economic study we could  
17          look at that, but I heard a number  
18          that says of the 750-some-odd  
19          employees, 754 employees related to  
20          the hospital, contribute to a  
21          payroll of \$70.6 million. That's  
22          \$94,000 average salary for those  
23          754 employees at the State  
24          Hospital.

1                   And I'd just like to  
2                   see where that number comes from.  
3                   Because the average salary of a  
4                   school teacher in this district is  
5                   around \$75,000. And the numbers  
6                   that we saw tonight says that the  
7                   average salary for a worker at the  
8                   Norristown State Hospital is  
9                   \$94,000, and I am just trying to  
10                  make some sense out of that.

11                  Thank you very much for  
12                  your time.

13                  G. HAYWARD SIMPSON: A  
14                  couple things that I noticed from  
15                  your report. The first thing is I  
16                  think you can put certain types of  
17                  projects in there that don't need  
18                  visibility, like incubators,  
19                  technical incubators, business  
20                  incubators that produce jobs and  
21                  bring in young talented minds, to  
22                  be a little bit more creative in  
23                  that space.

24                  The other thing is you

1 don't need visibility to have this.  
2 So you don't need -- and you are  
3 not going to kind of run away or  
4 misuse, or over impact any  
5 additional space for those because  
6 you're looking at things that may  
7 be kind of industrial in a visible  
8 standpoint with space and room to  
9 be able to create and develop  
10 certain things, but you  
11 don't necessarily -- and it won't  
12 necessarily go unused or  
13 underutilized.

14 Other thing that I  
15 noticed is what you're pushing for  
16 is senior housing. That's what I  
17 got from this. So listening to  
18 things like this previously,  
19 whenever you start talking about  
20 that, that's the direction that the  
21 state wants to go to. And that's  
22 not the direction that Norristown  
23 needs the state to go to.

24 So I would truly, or

1 highly recommend that you don't  
2 push so much senior living, because  
3 I think there are spaces in places  
4 around that would be able to  
5 facilitate that. But things that  
6 can generate revenue jobs  
7 potentially, things that create  
8 taxable property values, and not  
9 things that necessarily are related  
10 to non-prof.

11 I think one of the  
12 things you can also look at is some  
13 of the space that you have there  
14 maybe take those services that are  
15 there, put them in one building --  
16 create a building and put them in  
17 one building so they don't have to  
18 go away. You're not losing jobs,  
19 you're not losing that ability, but  
20 you're creating a space where  
21 people can be housed in one. But  
22 you're also creating space that can  
23 be utilized that can create or  
24 generate jobs and et cetera.

1                   So those are the things  
2                   that I think you should look at,  
3                   stay away from that -- the senior  
4                   housing. I know I'm getting old --  
5                   maybe my kids might take me in at  
6                   some point, who knows --

7                   (Laughter.)

8                   G. HAYWARD SIMPSON: --  
9                   but Norristown does not need  
10                  anything else that does not  
11                  generate. Anything that takes away  
12                  from it is non-beneficial. And  
13                  those are about the only things  
14                  that I have -- oh. Jim hasn't  
15                  changed, so make sure you protect  
16                  the water, and make sure that the  
17                  stormwater is running properly, and  
18                  that you have catch basins for  
19                  these things.

20                  And the last thing,  
21                  housing value in Norristown has  
22                  increased. I've watched them  
23                  increase, so when people say all  
24                  that craziness, and you look at how

1 houses are selling -- they're not  
2 balloon increase like we had some  
3 years ago, but they are steadily p  
4 increasing.

5 (Applause.)

6 MARLA RIVERA: Hello.  
7 This is Marla Rivera again. I'm  
8 here just to translate.

9 There are two family  
10 members that would like for me to  
11 translate their concerns.

12 These are...

13 MARIO VELAZQUEZ: My  
14 name is Mario Velazquez.

15 MIGUEL ROBLES: Miguel  
16 Robles.

17 BLANCA TELLEZ: Blanca  
18 Tellez.

19 MARLA RIVERA: These  
20 three individuals are members of  
21 the organization that help parents  
22 with their family members Latin  
23 and -- Latinos, and what they're  
24 asking is for you to reconsider the

1 fact that they currently work with  
2 children -- high-risk children in a  
3 club for soccer, and they occupy  
4 some of the spaces that you  
5 mentioned previously.

6 What they're asking is  
7 these children -- and that they  
8 see, and they see a maximum of 60  
9 kids of diverse ages that  
10 participate in this sport three  
11 days a week. I would like for you  
12 to consider and to think about  
13 recreational use for these  
14 children, as we advance in this  
15 project.

16 Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 DENISSE AGURTO: My  
19 name is Denisse Agurto. So he's  
20 the person who ran the soccer club,  
21 so he is going to speak in Spanish  
22 as well.

23 CHRISTOPHER JARAMILLO:

24 (Read comments in the Spanish

1 language.)

2 (Applause.)

3 THERESA LAUER: Hello,  
4 my name is Theresa Lauer,  
5 L-a-u-e-r. And I am a 12 year  
6 Norristown resident.

7 I don't have anything  
8 prepared, but I just wanted to  
9 speak because I care about the  
10 community. I find it to be a very  
11 vibrant community. And I don't  
12 want to see any of the  
13 redevelopment benefit a few, I want  
14 it to benefit the entire community.  
15 Because it's not all about money.

16 The patients are  
17 important, we have enough mental  
18 illness programs on the street,  
19 like outpatient programs, there's  
20 many on my street where people have  
21 to go to outpatient programs, and  
22 they are kind of lost, they don't  
23 have a lot of assistance. So I  
24 wouldn't like to see any more of

1           that.

2                         The open space is very  
3           important to the community. Like  
4           Philadelphia is going green, I  
5           think Norristown should go green,  
6           and the less we build, the better.  
7           We don't need to build everything.  
8           We don't need to do that.

9                         Senior housing is  
10          important but I think we might --  
11          we don't want to overload with  
12          that. We do have empty buildings  
13          that might be quite good  
14          opportunity for that also, and I  
15          don't want to see it benefit, again  
16          a few, maybe people with money, so  
17          now they have got the beautiful  
18          area and we have to walk past their  
19          houses when we go for a walk in  
20          Norristown State Park. Sorry, I  
21          don't like to speak in public, but  
22          it really is important to me.

23                         Obviously the jobs, a  
24          lot of people raise their family,

1 work in Norristown in this  
2 community, their children still  
3 work there, like some of my  
4 neighbors. So I'm sure the jobs  
5 are very important to people.

6 So whatever you do,  
7 please consider the community.  
8 Again, I understand people want to  
9 make money, but you can make money  
10 in a sustainable way and in a  
11 long-term way that benefits  
12 everybody. Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 MARY ELLEN MORAN: Good  
15 evening. My name is Mary Ellen  
16 Moran. I live in West Norriton  
17 Township. I just want to say as an  
18 aside I missed the West Norriton  
19 Township Meeting this evening to  
20 attend this meeting, and they are  
21 voting on some -- a rather critical  
22 ordinance in our township, but I  
23 thought the priority was to come  
24 here.

1 I am very anxious to  
2 see the final study findings of  
3 this state, or whatever this thing  
4 is that is doing the study. But as  
5 discussed during the briefing, a  
6 traffic impact study, you know,  
7 there -- that's a one-way street,  
8 or one-lane highway on Whitehall  
9 Road, it's a one-lane highway  
10 Sterigere Street. Norristown is  
11 quite congested in that area, down  
12 by the park, you know. I think  
13 that's a problem.

14 On some of your  
15 statistics of your studies that you  
16 have done, you had numbers that we  
17 couldn't see at the highest one.  
18 It would be nice to have  
19 percentages of the total population  
20 so you sort of get an idea of what  
21 people are saying. In one case you  
22 had 189 saying that they wanted the  
23 open space, and then you said there  
24 was 50 that wanted something else.

1 It would be sort of nice to see  
2 percentages of that value, to give  
3 the audience a better feeling of  
4 how the community responded.

5 You talked about senior  
6 living, also. There was some other  
7 development that was supposed to be  
8 starting at Montgomery Hospital for  
9 senior living in the -- I guess  
10 three years. I'm not sure how long  
11 Montgomery Hospital has been  
12 demolished, there has been one unit  
13 built, and not too much more. So  
14 senior development, we do have  
15 space in Montgomery Hospital. It  
16 was hard to see that building go.

17 I was also very happy  
18 to hear that there were children  
19 playing there. As a child, in high  
20 school, I volunteered at the State  
21 Hospital with the mental patients,  
22 and used to play tennis there  
23 myself, and I'm very glad to see  
24 that kids of the community have a

1 resource to do sports and, you  
2 know, use their energy in a  
3 positive and challenging way for  
4 them.

5 And last thing I would  
6 like for you to touch on is the  
7 environmental impact of development  
8 of Norristown State Hospital.  
9 Right now in -- near our township,  
10 and in Norristown, we have three  
11 open spaces left: Jeffersonville  
12 Golf Course, Westover Golf Course,  
13 and the State Hospital.

14 You know, the other  
15 areas, if you look at them aerially  
16 from the sky, they are heavily  
17 developed already, and I think we  
18 need some green space. So I thank  
19 you for your time, and your  
20 listening to me. Good night.

21 (Applause.)

22 KARA ROTHSCHILD-RODE: Hello, my  
23 name is Kara Rothschild-Rode. I am a new  
24 homeowner in Norristown. I also work on the

1 grounds of Norristown State Hospital, but I  
2 prefer not to disclose which agency because  
3 I'm here as a citizen and not a  
4 representative for my agency.

5 First and foremost -- I  
6 have a few questions that I hope  
7 could possibly be addressed. First  
8 and foremost I was wondering is  
9 there any certain buildings that  
10 are going to be going untouched.  
11 I'm sure that everybody is aware of  
12 the current, or rebuilding of  
13 Building 10, in order to replace  
14 some people from Building 50  
15 because of an issue with the ACLU,  
16 and an order against the  
17 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. So  
18 there's been recent rebuilding, and  
19 I was curious what buildings go  
20 untouched, if any.

21 I was wondering what  
22 outreach and surveying has been  
23 done with agencies that are leasing  
24 buildings. I know that there was a

1 lot of information which I really  
2 appreciate, I think it is very  
3 helpful and important to know what  
4 conversations have been had with  
5 Norristown State Hospital  
6 employees, but as indicated there's  
7 hundreds of other employees that  
8 work for other agencies from these  
9 buildings. So I want to know if  
10 they were at all a part of the  
11 conversation, because I think it is  
12 important that they are.

13 And most importantly,  
14 I'm a therapist, so I'm kind of  
15 coming here for my clients that  
16 don't have a voice, that don't even  
17 know what is happening. And I'm  
18 wondering if there's any way to  
19 ethically involve clients in this  
20 conversation? Because I work with  
21 some people that Norristown State  
22 Hospital has been their home for a  
23 majority of their lives, and I  
24 can't foresee anywhere else they

1           could possibly live, for a variety  
2           of reasons.

3                         And I don't even know  
4           the answer to that, if there is a  
5           way to ethically involve clients in  
6           the conversation, but for many  
7           people it is their home, it is all  
8           that they know. A lot of people  
9           that I serviced and a lot of people  
10          that receive services on the ground  
11          have been in the mental health  
12          system for a very long time.

13                        That's a whole separate  
14          conversation, but I think it is  
15          really important that the general  
16          public be made aware of this,  
17          because it's not always talked  
18          about. Mental health is just  
19          recently being talked about. You  
20          know, historically, Norristown  
21          State Hospital was actually  
22          referred to, I think it's The  
23          Hospital For the Insane.  
24          Fortunately we've come a very long

1 way from that, but there's still a  
2 lot of stigma surrounding mental  
3 health and I think it is really  
4 important that the clients get some  
5 say in this, so I am doing what I  
6 can, by at least being a little bit  
7 of a voice for them here tonight.  
8 Thank you very much.

9 (Applause.)

10 BILL CALDWELL: Good  
11 afternoon. My name is Bill  
12 Caldwell. I'm a resident of  
13 Norristown, and I want to thank you  
14 for giving us the opportunity to be  
15 able to speak this evening.

16 Number one, one of the  
17 things a number of people have said  
18 tonight has been -- a number of  
19 people questioned, I should say, is  
20 some of the stats that you gave us.

21 I think it would be --  
22 perhaps behoove you guys to give a  
23 better breakdown of that. Because  
24 like all the people around I did

1           some quick calculations on the back  
2           of a cell phone, and what I came up  
3           with, with your figure of  
4           80 percent of the people that work  
5           at the State Hospital don't live in  
6           East Norriton, West Norriton,  
7           Norristown, I came up with a tax  
8           revenue that comes in for those  
9           three communities is about \$60,000  
10          a year, not -- I don't know about  
11          you, but if I calculate that,  
12          that's a -- from an average of what  
13          people in Norristown, East  
14          Norriton, and West Norriton pay in  
15          property taxes, that's about ten  
16          households that make up that. I  
17          mean frankly that is not even  
18          enough -- \$60,000 is not enough to  
19          keep the roads paved to and from  
20          the hospital a year.

21                        I mean it's -- I think  
22          we've got to do, or one of the  
23          things that the residents of  
24          Norristown expect is that this

1 process gives us a much better  
2 return on the investments that are  
3 going to be made.

4 You know, I don't think  
5 it's a secret to anyone in this  
6 town, or again East or West  
7 Norriton, that one of the things  
8 that we need is rateable  
9 properties -- frankly rateable  
10 commercial properties. The burden  
11 right now of our tax burden, you  
12 know, property owners in Norristown  
13 and communities, our tax burden as  
14 the residential properties is what  
15 bears the costs of doing all the  
16 business that these communities  
17 have to do.

18 This project, I think,  
19 needs to focus on generating viable  
20 commercial space and do that at  
21 whatever it takes to do that. It's  
22 the only really long-term solution  
23 to either the municipality or  
24 frankly the school district's

1 survival at a reasonable tax rate.  
2 We need that to be commercial. We  
3 need it to be generating income so  
4 we can operate the municipality,  
5 provide the services that everybody  
6 expects, and do it without  
7 overburdening the residents of the  
8 community. It's the only way we  
9 survive.

10 So I think, personally,  
11 and will always think it's  
12 incumbent frankly upon our  
13 partners, the Commonwealth, our  
14 government of the Commonwealth,  
15 frankly, to look at that very hard  
16 and not look for an easy, simple,  
17 quick fix. To make this work, make  
18 it work right, and make it work for  
19 the local community. Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 ANTHONY UHRICH: Anthon  
22 y Uhrich, Norristown resident. As  
23 was mentioned previously, I think  
24 that if development were to occur,

1 one of it the priorities would be  
2 to improve the impaired Stoney  
3 Creek.

4 Second is if there are  
5 only two forensic units in the  
6 state I would assume that there's  
7 an opportunity to seek out state  
8 money in the form of grants,  
9 et cetera. Pennsylvania is a  
10 pretty large state, so, you know,  
11 if we're taking pretty much the  
12 whole eastern side there's got to  
13 be money available for that.

14 Additionally, the  
15 native plant sale that takes place  
16 on the grounds, there are only a  
17 few small greenhouses. I believe  
18 that that could be incredibly  
19 improved upon, made bigger, made a  
20 lot more advertised to the public.

21 And, additionally, as  
22 mentioned, there's a West Norriton  
23 Township meeting now with an agenda  
24 item of using 80 minimum of native

1 plants in any future projects. So  
2 as it is a West Norriton/Norristown  
3 endeavor, I feel like they can work  
4 hand in hand.

5 And, lastly, if  
6 development were to occur, I  
7 believe it would be imperative to  
8 preserve as much open space as  
9 possible. Thank you.

10 SUSAN SHANNON: I  
11 didn't really prepare anything,  
12 sorry.

13 I'm Susan Shannon, and  
14 I work at 1210 Stanbridge Street,  
15 in Norristown. I am the executive  
16 director of HopeWorx, which is a  
17 nonprofit.

18 We were formerly  
19 located on the State Hospital  
20 grounds, we were in Building 6, and  
21 then Building 6 became  
22 uninhabitable, so we had to move,  
23 and we moved across the street.  
24 And we had to start paying rent.

1                   And the work that I do  
2                   is part of the mental health system  
3                   here in Montgomery County -- all of  
4                   Montgomery County, and it's funded  
5                   by tax dollars. And now my -- by  
6                   moving out the cost of my  
7                   services -- the services that my  
8                   agency provided went significantly  
9                   higher, significantly higher.

10                   Some of it offset, you  
11                   know, I had to employ less people,  
12                   some of it was offset by your tax  
13                   dollars had to spend more money on  
14                   me. And we are just a tiny little  
15                   program. There's a lot of other  
16                   places on the hospital grounds that  
17                   are going to be facing similar  
18                   situations. And to me I sit and  
19                   think: Oh, my gosh. That's a lot  
20                   of my tax dollars to relocate  
21                   services off of the grounds.

22                   But anyway, beyond  
23                   that, I live in Norristown but  
24                   almost everybody that works for me

1 does. We serve all of Montgomery  
 2 County but we are very much  
 3 Norristown -- part of the  
 4 Norristown community. We  
 5 participate in the community  
 6 garden, we volunteer around town,  
 7 we cater our parties from  
 8 Norristown businesses, we go out to  
 9 Norristown restaurants as a group.  
 10 I mean it's not just the buying gas  
 11 at Wawa, although we do that too,  
 12 it's -- we really are committed  
 13 citizens of Norristown.

14 And so it's just  
 15 something that I really want people  
 16 to -- my big question is: What is  
 17 the plan for all the places that  
 18 are on the grounds that are  
 19 providing pretty efficient mental  
 20 health services to our county and  
 21 our state right now?

22 (Applause.)

23 KIM HENDERSON: Kim  
 24 Henderson, again, from East

1 Norriton. I just saw on either 60  
2 minutes or the Channel 3 morning --  
3 the Sunday morning news about a  
4 park that was rehabilitated in  
5 Moscow by an American developer,  
6 and they created a space that has a  
7 philharmonic area.

8 I know the zoo is doing  
9 amazing things there. I don't know  
10 if they are looking to expand even  
11 further than what they are actually  
12 doing, but when I think of areas  
13 like this, I think of that live,  
14 work, play. And I also wanted to  
15 contribute that too. With this  
16 kind of park is a lot bigger, and  
17 be able to have a live, work, play  
18 area for the whole community, and  
19 to be able to bring in commerce and  
20 entertainment. I think  
21 entertainment is another thing we  
22 are kind of missing in the area.  
23 Thank you again.

24 KYM RAMSEY: Good

1 evening. I'm Kym Ramsey, and I am  
2 an owner of Ric and Kym, LLC, which  
3 was created to establish the Willow  
4 School, a four-star quality  
5 education center. I have been in  
6 the heart of Norristown for six  
7 years. I'm also the founder and  
8 president of the newly formed  
9 Norristown Chamber of Commerce,  
10 that was established in January of  
11 2017.

12 In such a sort time the  
13 Chamber has been able to attract  
14 and collaborate with over a hundred  
15 and twenty local businesses,  
16 nonprofits, community leaders and  
17 created positive outcomes for  
18 Norristown. And that's because  
19 it's based on our mission, vision  
20 and belief that Norristown is a  
21 great place for diversity,  
22 ingenuity, in which businesses and  
23 communities can come together to  
24 prosper.

1                   So before us now, as  
2                   many of you have stated, Norristown  
3                   has residents, businesses,  
4                   nonprofits and community leaders  
5                   have an important historic  
6                   opportunity. It is an opportunity  
7                   that will determine and define the  
8                   economic future for Norristown and,  
9                   consequently, the success of all of  
10                  us in future generations to come.

11                  So tonight the  
12                  Norristown Chamber of Commerce --  
13                  and I brought a small portion of  
14                  our group here tonight, would like  
15                  to present -- some of you have  
16                  mentioned some very bold and  
17                  innovative ideas for this use for  
18                  the state grounds that we would  
19                  like to show today. So we will do  
20                  that in video form, and then  
21                  verbally give summation of this  
22                  innovative use that we have that  
23                  benefits not just us but  
24                  Norristown.

1 BILL CORBETT: Before  
2 we move on to this video, everybody  
3 here is here because they really  
4 care a great deal about  
5 Norristown -- Corbett,  
6 C-o-r-b-e-t-t.

7 COURT STENOGRAPHER: Could you  
8 use the microphone, please.

9 BILL CORBETT: I'm not  
10 loud enough that you can hear me?  
11 Oh, my God.

12 So what we want to try  
13 to get everybody to do here is take  
14 a moment and just imagine what  
15 could be. And this is a bold and  
16 audacious idea, but what I like  
17 about it is it conforms with a lot  
18 of what was said here tonight in  
19 terms of the economic development  
20 and the things that we need to do  
21 in this big parcel of wonderful  
22 opportunity left here in  
23 Norristown.

24 And I think we can

1 accomplish green space and the  
2 recreational ideas, and this great  
3 soccer team. I think we can bring  
4 in and take care of a lot of the  
5 people that are on the campus now  
6 that need the jobs. And SEPTA's  
7 going to be happy because we're  
8 going to have more people coming.  
9 But I think there was some talk  
10 about an incubator space, and  
11 creative space, and community  
12 space, the kind of space that we  
13 hear about with Philadelphia, the  
14 Point Breeze, and the Liberty  
15 sections, and the things that are  
16 going on around us, and how things  
17 get rebirth.

18 So when you watch this  
19 video, it's more than just a video,  
20 it's -- it's -- watch it as though  
21 it exists. And understand what  
22 that could mean to all of us that  
23 care about Norristown, all of us  
24 that work here, all of us that play

1 here, all of us that want to eat  
2 here and hang here. And turn this  
3 town into something that it needs  
4 to be as soon as possible. And I  
5 know we are all for that.

6 Norristown has a  
7 phenomenal history and it's our  
8 chance, right now, with this  
9 development project, to return it  
10 back to something that makes us the  
11 designation town. So watch this  
12 and dream for a minute. We could  
13 make this happen if we stick  
14 together and work on it.

15 (Whereupon, a video was  
16 presented.)

17 (Applause.)

18 CHRIS DiPAOLO: My name  
19 is Chris DiPaolo. I'm the owner of  
20 Cyrten, we're a technology staffing  
21 company located here on Airy  
22 street.

23 And at Chamber we've  
24 been having meetings over the last

1 several months kind of kicking  
2 around ideas, trying to figure out  
3 what would be the best integrative  
4 use for the entire campus, and we  
5 came up with several concepts that  
6 kind of drove that video. We  
7 wanted to share with the whole  
8 community.

9 First slide. We kind  
10 of looked at the Stoney Creek  
11 campus as the end unit for the  
12 economic livelihood for all of our  
13 surrounding area, targeting growth  
14 or knowledge in thought-based  
15 companies. Basically going after  
16 jobs that are in high demand today,  
17 and that we know will be into the  
18 next century. Jobs that are not  
19 easily outsourced overseas or  
20 automated. Adaptively reusing  
21 viable structures on the campus, or  
22 where we actually look at maker  
23 spaces, your entrepreneurial  
24 startups, different areas.

1                   A lot of those  
2                   buildings that are historically --  
3                   well, functionally obsolete are  
4                   perfect for those sort of small  
5                   startups. And then there are other  
6                   areas where you can bring in other  
7                   sorts of things.

8                   But with that we wanted  
9                   to focus on primarily the software,  
10                  engineering, in the tech space  
11                  robotics, automation biomedical,  
12                  life sciences and research.

13                  All of these industries  
14                  have high demands right now for  
15                  qualified people and they are  
16                  projected to have high demand for  
17                  the next -- you know, far out as we  
18                  can look.

19                  And the whole idea is  
20                  that while we know the economy is  
21                  cyclical, there will be a recession  
22                  one day, we do not know when, but  
23                  the whole idea is if we can  
24                  insulate our community from the

1 effects of that as much as possible  
2 this could be the engine that helps  
3 us do that and keep those jobs  
4 here.

5 Along with that it's a  
6 fantastic space, so there's a huge  
7 opportunity there to create great  
8 community connections. A good part  
9 of the community uses the State  
10 Hospital grounds currently, but  
11 it's really underutilized. A lot  
12 of folks just don't know it's  
13 there, or available for them to  
14 use, it feels a little forboding.

15 So with this we can do  
16 things like give access and more  
17 opportunity by leveraging with the  
18 Elmwood Park Zoo, which has seen  
19 rebirth over the last few years.  
20 We could leverage the unused rail  
21 line. Connect Stoney Creek campus  
22 to the zoo and the suburbs. That  
23 rail line is fully active, it's  
24 just not used. So in terms of job

1 creation you tie in right there to  
2 the entire SEPTA network.

3 Then you can leverage  
4 the Stoney Creek Greenway Plan by  
5 connecting and interweaving trails  
6 throughout the campus, to the farm  
7 park, to the creek. And it's one  
8 seamless recreation area, that  
9 travels -- the recreation travels  
10 through the entire campus.

11 And then create  
12 community. All right, the  
13 residents that live here have a  
14 huge stake in this. Not only  
15 economically, but just quality of  
16 life. So the idea is to create  
17 dedicated spaces within the campus  
18 that allow for folks to dine and  
19 socialize, play sports, walk or  
20 ride their bikes, and invite their  
21 friends and family to stay here.

22 One of the biggest  
23 things employers look at in  
24 locating a company is: Are my

1 people going to be happy there?  
2 Are they going to, like, stay  
3 there -- and not only stay there,  
4 they want them to have a space to  
5 be able to stay there and eat. And  
6 so we want to try and attract those  
7 folks and residents to mingle  
8 together in one space, not  
9 segregated, not at all like the  
10 traditional office park where you  
11 have to get in your car and drive  
12 someplace to go get lunch, but  
13 truly walkable and self-sustaining  
14 community. That's what we have.  
15 Thanks so much.

16 (Applause.)

17 BILL CORBETT: One  
18 final comment. You know, when we  
19 talk about --

20 MARY ELLEN MORAN: Your  
21 five minutes are up.

22 BILL CORBETT: Pardon?

23 MARY ELLEN MORAN: Are  
24 your five minutes up yet?

1 BILL CORBETT: I guess  
2 they are.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: E  
4 xcuse me real quick, Mike? Your  
5 name is Mike; right?

6 MR. TRUAX: Troy.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I  
8 just need one thing to be  
9 understood. So when you're talking  
10 about redevelopment, you're talking  
11 about redeveloping only that which  
12 has already been developed, not  
13 affecting the green space that's  
14 already open, not into that --

15 MR. TRUAX: Yes,  
16 Norristown Farm Park, if that's  
17 what you're referring to --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, I'm  
19 only asking because that's the same question  
20 about green space.

21 MR. TRUAX: Yes.  
22 That's totally off the table in  
23 terms of our focus area. It's just  
24 on the actual developed part of the

1 campus we're looking at.

2 Did others have  
3 comments, questions, that we can  
4 record? Again, what we like to do,  
5 your comments are absolutely on  
6 target in terms of what we want to  
7 hear back additionally from what  
8 we've already heard.

9 A lot of the  
10 information that you've already  
11 talked about, in terms of open  
12 space, or other types of uses, echo  
13 what we also heard with the  
14 surveys, but also through the  
15 stakeholder interviews and outreach  
16 that we've done. So your  
17 additional input reinforces that  
18 information for us.

19 What we would like to  
20 do is make sure that with the  
21 transcript -- and I know some have  
22 asked questions, we want to take  
23 the time to go through those  
24 questions and actually provide back

1 a comprehensive written response.

2 And we'll get that out on the

3 website as well.

4           Again, we will put the  
5 website up again, it's the  
6 Pennsylvania Department of Human  
7 Services Norristown State Hospital  
8 website. Even if you just Google  
9 "Norristown State Hospital," you  
10 will find that, as well in terms of  
11 the hit, the link.

12           We have more time, so  
13 please come to the mic.

14           TORY BRIGHT: Good  
15 evening. My name is Tory Bright,  
16 and I am the director for the  
17 Southeast Regional Mental Health  
18 Office. I also am an employee of  
19 the Norristown Borough for the last  
20 30-plus years. My office works on  
21 behalf of the five southeast county  
22 departments of mental health, those  
23 being Bucks, Chester, Montgomery,  
24 and Philadelphia. The regional

1 office has been in existence for  
2 over 18 years. We've worked  
3 collaboratively and on behalf of  
4 the county on special projects and  
5 on developing and supporting  
6 specialized community-based  
7 programs for those persons who have  
8 serious persistent mental illness.

9 Each of the five  
10 counties coordinate the system with  
11 behavioral health programs that  
12 serve their communities in  
13 promoting recovery for people who  
14 experience mental health  
15 challenges. Together as a region,  
16 we have combined resources to  
17 develop additional services and  
18 programs in the five counties,  
19 which support individuals who have  
20 clinically challenging behaviors or  
21 may have other co-occurring  
22 challenges which require  
23 specialized supports. The majority  
24 of the regional services support

1 individuals who come from state  
2 institutions or state hospitals.

3 In January of 2018, the  
4 Department of Human Services  
5 announced the agreement with  
6 Norristown Municipality to  
7 determine the future of the  
8 Norristown State Hospital property.  
9 The comments that I share this  
10 evening are specifically in  
11 response to item No. 3, which  
12 states "DHS will work with all  
13 providers currently leasing space  
14 on NHS's campus and their  
15 respective counties to development  
16 action plans by January 2020 for  
17 relocating their programs."

18 In May 2018 the  
19 Southeast counties, through my  
20 office, conducted a survey of all  
21 county contracted service providers  
22 on the grounds of Norristown State  
23 Hospital. A 43 question survey was  
24 sent to six provider organizations,

1 those being Montgomery County  
2 Emergency Services, Carelink  
3 Community Support, Circle Lodge,  
4 Resources for Human Development,  
5 Elwyn, and Horizon House.

6           These community  
7 providers have approximately nine  
8 distinct programs on the campus.  
9 Seven of the programs are located  
10 in Norristown Borough, while two  
11 are in West Norriton Borough. Four  
12 of the programs are contracted and  
13 funded by multiple counties, while  
14 the remaining five are contracted  
15 services for a single county.

16           It should also be noted  
17 that several of these programs on  
18 the campus were developed in  
19 response to the downsizing of  
20 Norristown State Hospital, and the  
21 Department of Human Services  
22 settlement terms in the ACLU  
23 lawsuit, in 2015.

24           Combined there's a

1 total capacity of 304 beds for  
2 individuals who are served at any  
3 given time among these nine  
4 programs. The total number of  
5 persons served annually range  
6 upwards between 3500 and 3800  
7 persons. The total number of staff  
8 employed by these nine programs in  
9 a 24-hour period range between 260  
10 and 275 staff. The individuals who  
11 are served by these programs,  
12 unlike other traditional  
13 community-based programs, do  
14 present with significant behavioral  
15 challenges.

16 Many of the individuals  
17 may have high-risk behaviors and  
18 require intensive clinical supports  
19 which otherwise may prohibit them  
20 from living in traditional, what we  
21 consider community-based settings.  
22 Most individuals do not need a  
23 state hospital level of care;  
24 however, they do require

1 specialized and sometimes secure  
2 clinical support services.

3 The programs have been  
4 on the ground for an average of  
5 18.3 years, with the longest being  
6 44 years, and the shortest being  
7 one-and-a-half years. All of the  
8 providers lease their space from  
9 the Department of General Services  
10 and are required to pay an annual  
11 amount that varies based on the  
12 square footage, which includes a  
13 one dollar per year lease, plus  
14 utility costs for the space. The  
15 total occupancy charged  
16 collectively for the nine programs  
17 is approximately \$1.8 million  
18 annually. These costs paid for by  
19 county mental health departments.

20 With the age of the  
21 buildings obviously there comes  
22 maintenance. And all of the  
23 programs have required significant  
24 maintenance and capital

1 improvements over the years. The  
2 improvement expenses are typically  
3 funded by mental health department  
4 contracts. The results from our  
5 survey indicated that providers  
6 that collectively spent  
7 approximately \$4.7 million over the  
8 course of the last 10 years to  
9 maintain and/or do improvement over  
10 these buildings. This does not  
11 include the recently invested  
12 taxpayer dollars of approximately  
13 \$1.8 million, for the Building 9  
14 renovation, for a recently  
15 developed program that was created  
16 in response to the Department of  
17 Human Service settlement terms from  
18 the ACLU lawsuit. These are lost  
19 taxpayer dollars, if all these  
20 programs would have to relocate.

21 Providers were asked  
22 what would it cost to relocate the  
23 programs? Some providers looked at  
24 the possibility of new

1 construction, while other providers  
2 looked at finding existing sites  
3 and renovation costs per square  
4 foot for comparable space in the  
5 community. The collective minimum  
6 costs were calculated to be  
7 roughly -- and this is a soft  
8 estimate, \$75 million based on  
9 square footage needed, construction  
10 and renovation costs and probable  
11 legal fees.

12 This would be \$75  
13 million of Pennsylvania taxpayer  
14 dollars to support this effort.  
15 These figures are relocation costs  
16 only, they do not factor in the  
17 day-to-day operations of the  
18 program. This doesn't include the  
19 economic impact on the lost dollars  
20 of past renovations, which as I  
21 said is roughly \$5 million that  
22 went into just the building  
23 improvements. Not only would this  
24 be a financial loss to the

1 provider, the counties'  
2 investments, but also to taxpayers  
3 since the great majority of these  
4 dollars used for these services are  
5 public taxpayer dollars.

6 The estimated length of  
7 time for relocation, if the  
8 providers were to find an  
9 appropriately zoned and suitable  
10 community site, would be minimally  
11 two to five years. However, the  
12 experience with all of these  
13 providers in locating residential  
14 human service related properties  
15 throughout the five-county region  
16 is often met with attitudes and  
17 barriers of "Not In My Backyard,"  
18 or referred to as "NIMBY," and  
19 typically requires extensive legal  
20 battles at both state and federal  
21 levels, increasing the costs, and,  
22 unfortunately, delays in services  
23 and great burdens on the mental  
24 health system.

1                   The significant cost to  
2                   the providers, the counties, the  
3                   state, the taxpayers and, more  
4                   importantly, the human costs of  
5                   relocating the individuals who  
6                   require services is incalculable.

7                   The ripple effect of  
8                   such a move of this proportion, and  
9                   the burden on the already strained  
10                  human service delivery network will  
11                  be felt throughout the counties and  
12                  Pennsylvania mental health  
13                  communities for years to come.

14                  We also know that this  
15                  will require county and state  
16                  leadership, support and influence,  
17                  not just to mention intensive staff  
18                  hours. And finally the proposed  
19                  relocation would require 100  
20                  percent new fiscal dollars to  
21                  support the initiative.

22                  If Department of Human  
23                  Service moves forward with this  
24                  proposed "provider exit" plan by

1           2020, as indicated, we collectively  
2           need to ascertain in these  
3           difficult financial times where the  
4           minimum of at least \$75 million  
5           will come from? We will need to  
6           continue the vital work of the  
7           providers to ensure public safety.

8                         We are not saying that  
9           we are not opposed to this, but we  
10          will need to have collaboration  
11          throughout. The need to identify  
12          new funding to pay for relocation  
13          and increase operational cost is a  
14          challenge that will have to be met  
15          before relocation could  
16          realistically be planned or  
17          accomplished.

18                        In order for the  
19          counties' Departments of Mental  
20          Health to support and implement  
21          this initiative, we need to be  
22          assured that the new funds will be  
23          committed to relocate the programs  
24          and the state county government

1 leadership will share in the  
2 responsibility to support this  
3 initiative.

4 Thank you again for the  
5 opportunity to share in our  
6 comments.

7 (Applause.)

8 ABBY GRASSO: I know we  
9 are after 8:00, so I will keep  
10 comments brief but hopefully  
11 poignant. My name is Abby Grasso,  
12 G-r-a-s-s-o. I am the executive  
13 director of NAMI, the National  
14 Alliance on Mental Illness, in  
15 Montgomery County. Our office is  
16 located in Lansdale, Pennsylvania,  
17 but we do an unbelievable amount of  
18 partnerships with programming and  
19 community groups, libraries, family  
20 members, all throughout the county,  
21 Norristown being one of our main  
22 areas that we are involved with in  
23 serving families and individuals  
24 impacted by mental illness.

1                   Norristown State has  
2                   been providing services for over  
3                   140 years. And this has been a  
4                   safe environment for people to get  
5                   better and have the opportunity and  
6                   chance to live their best life.

7                   As shown in the  
8                   findings from the survey thus far,  
9                   we talked about the employees that  
10                  work on the State Hospital grounds  
11                  but we didn't talk about the  
12                  people, and the amount of people  
13                  that are served. And in talking  
14                  with many of our community  
15                  partners, such as Montgomery County  
16                  Emergency Services, providing  
17                  inpatient hospitalizations and --  
18                  inpatient -- I'm sorry guys, this  
19                  is what happens at this time of  
20                  night -- inpatient hospitalization  
21                  and crisis stabilization, as well  
22                  as the CHOP Homeless Shelter, the  
23                  Circle Lodge, Elwyn programs. With  
24                  the combined impact of employees

1 and people served, we're looking at  
2 over 5,000 people annually. It  
3 grows a little bit when you add the  
4 people that are served on the  
5 campus, and not just talk about the  
6 employees.

7 And the question for  
8 future planning of the hospital  
9 grounds are more than buildings or  
10 programs, it's about developed  
11 plan -- not about development plans  
12 or rebuilding community, it's  
13 really about people.

14 We all want to live in  
15 a wonderful environment and a  
16 wonderful community that has good  
17 economy, and good neighbors, but  
18 what a lot of people don't realize  
19 is the programs that are on  
20 Norristown State Hospital grounds  
21 right now, that have people in  
22 their bed and their program  
23 facilities right now, are providing  
24 essential programs such as housing

1 for homeless population. They're  
2 providing education and skills so  
3 people can live their best life, so  
4 that they can come back and be  
5 productive members of our  
6 community.

7 I have colleagues right  
8 now sitting in this room that have  
9 been through programming on  
10 Norristown State and they're living  
11 wonderful happy lives. And I think  
12 that's what each of us want for  
13 ourselves and for our family  
14 members.

15 As the independent land  
16 study is completed with input from  
17 all stakeholder groups it's  
18 imperative to think about the  
19 people going through the  
20 programming.

21 Often those people are  
22 misunderstood, judged, and there's  
23 a huge stigma about them being in  
24 my community. We heard it here

1           tonight, I heard it last year at  
2           the community stakeholder meeting  
3           for Norristown State Hospital  
4           Planning, so that's still alive and  
5           well. So we need to have education  
6           and help communities understand  
7           that the programs in your backyard  
8           are helping people gain skills and  
9           knowledge and support, so that they  
10          can live a good healthy life.

11                        I urge you as we make  
12          decisions and we make transitions,  
13          to include people. Kara, I don't  
14          know if there's an ethical or  
15          nonethical component to this, but  
16          family members and people served in  
17          Norristown State Hospital grounds  
18          have to be involved in the planning  
19          for transition.

20                        As Tory mentioned,  
21          planning is supposed to be  
22          happening and places identified for  
23          2020. That is two years. That is  
24          a lot of work to be done in two

1 years. And tonight is about  
2 community. It's about  
3 revitalization, and it is about  
4 economy, but it's about people.  
5 And that's what we need to leave  
6 here with tonight. Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. TRUAX: Are there  
9 any others that would like to  
10 provide comment?

11 (No audible response.)

12 MR. TRUAX: Last call.  
13 I really want to  
14 appreciate everybody's time, I am  
15 really impressed by the turnout  
16 tonight. I think that was  
17 mentioned up front, it really shows  
18 that you care about this. And I  
19 want you to know that we are taking  
20 this all in.

21 I will have to admit we  
22 did actually interview some of the  
23 patients, so I will just end with  
24 that note too. We are looking at a

1 variety -- every aspect of the  
2 project, so we have interviewed the  
3 tenants that we just talked about  
4 and got input. Some of those  
5 interviews actually included some  
6 of the patients to give personal  
7 testimonies about the importance of  
8 the facility and the operations  
9 there.

10 So all of your inputs,  
11 you know, from the development  
12 perspective, the preservation  
13 perspective, the environmental  
14 perspectives, youth recreational  
15 program perspectives, it's all in  
16 what we are assessing in moving  
17 forward with.

18 So just like we talked  
19 about, the transcript and the  
20 presentation will be posted on the  
21 website. I know that's hard to  
22 read but it's the  
23 [www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/statehospit](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/statehospitals/norristownstatehospital)  
24 [als/norristownstatehospital](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/statehospitals/norristownstatehospital).

1                   If you just simply  
2           Google DHS Norristown State  
3           Hospital that will take you to that  
4           website. So that's is much easier  
5           than trying to write that URL out.  
6           But once this is actually posted  
7           too you will have access.

8                   The other thing too,  
9           the comment cards, some of you  
10          actually may have written on the  
11          comment cards, that would be great.  
12          What we ask, if you have those  
13          already written out, please leave  
14          those at the table on your way out.

15                   If you want to take  
16          time over the weekend, and next  
17          week, that is perfectly right to  
18          do, you have two ways: Number one,  
19          there is a QR code, so if you are  
20          into technology that will take you  
21          right to that survey, and it's  
22          simply an open text box to write  
23          your comments out. Those are due  
24          as well as the return cards by next

1 Friday noon. If you have the  
2 cards, please return them back to  
3 Norristown Municipal Hall here, and  
4 then we give you until next Friday  
5 to complete that online survey.

6 Again the  
7 opportunity -- if you weren't  
8 wanting to get up in front of the  
9 crowd to speak, there's your  
10 opportunity to provide some written  
11 comment.

12 So with that, we  
13 appreciate your time, we hope  
14 everybody has a safe trip home, and  
15 we will keep you posted and  
16 informed as we move forward.

17 Thank you very much.

18 (At 8:12 p.m., public  
19 hearing was concluded.)  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24